

28 April 2020

Dear Editor,

We applaud the World Health Organization (WHO)'s relentless commitment to science, solutions, and solidarity with all nations in fighting this viral storm. All Heads of States should be united in their support for the Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and his excellent, hard-working staff.

We urge President Trump to reconsider his decision to review USA funding of the WHO at the height of this global pandemic of COVID-19. Our Global Coalition for Circulatory Health stands side by side with the WHO as it coordinates the global response to the COVID-19 crisis. To undermine this crucial global effort by threatening to withdraw critically important funding from the WHO can only exacerbate this global threat. At the same time, we would encourage other organization and countries to increase their funding to the WHO.

We already recognize the impact that COVID-19 is having on our patients with circulatory diseases, such as myocardial infarctions, and leading to thrombotic events such as pulmonary embolus and strokes. Patients with predisposing factors like hypertension and diabetes are at higher risk of dying from this virus. As international scientific societies we believe that science must lead all our responses to this pandemic and that is why we, as a Global Coalition, are united in our efforts to better understand through scientific enquiry the consequences of this infection and how these can be mitigated to save lives. Science must inform policy at every level and the WHO is an exemplar in advocating policies to national governments based on science.

We need leadership in global health now more than ever and we add our voices to those calling for solidarity. The USA is abdicating global leadership under the current administration in their response to this pandemic and Heads of States from every other country should stand together in repudiating President Trump's undermining of the WHO by threatening to withdraw funding. Only together can we overcome this pandemic.

Signed by the Presidents and Chairs of the Global Coalition for Circulatory Health

(see overleaf)

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